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REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in the present application. The prior Final Office Action dated Nevember 14, 2005 and the current Advisory Action dated February 2, 2006, has rejected all of the claims as anticipated by one reference, US 2004/0255122 A1, Ingerman et al. (hereinafter Ingerman). Independent Claims 1, 16-19 have been amended. For at least the reasons discussed below, Applicants submit that the pending claims are patentable over the prior art of record.

U.S.C. 102 Rejection

The Office Action rejected Claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. 102 (e) as being anticipated by Ingerman. The Office Action found that all of the elements of the claimed invention were either taught by the Ingerman reference or were inherent. Applicants respectfully disagree for at least the reasons discussed below.

Amended claim 1 determines the degree of separation between each of a plurality of nodes that are associated with a first node, wherein the first node and at least a portion of the associated plurality of nodes are granted membership in a community based on a number of degrees of separation between the first node and a second node in the community, and wherein the granting of membership in the community is controlled by at least an adaptive cut-off radius for the community. Amended claim 1 further determines the adaptive cut-off radius for the community based in part on a rate of growth of the community.

As described in the Specification, a node's community is controlled in total size based on an adaptive cut off radius that is based on more than just the degrees of separation from another node. The adaptive cut-off radius is determined based in part on the growth of the community: "[a]fter a certain period of time, the CGL may reach a semi-stable state, growing very slowly if growing at all, ... [t]he effective cut-off radius may be infinity when the address is a new born (none or few first degree links). However, the cut-off radius should quickly decrease as the mailbox matures, making the CGL system more effective for the user." Specification, p. 12, lines 10-15. Once a semi-stable state of growth is detected for a community associated with a particular

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node, a cut-off radius prevents the granting of further memberships in the community for other nodes with even relatively close degrees of separation which may have been almost automatically granted while the total size of the membership in the community was relatively small. Specification, p. 12, lines 6-15. By limiting the total number of members in a community that has attained a relatively stable state of growth, relatively significant resource savings are obtained by the claimed invention.

The Office Action refers to the following section of Ingerman as anticipating an aspect of Claim 1. Ingerman, p. 10-11, para. 0091:

For example, it may be that in a particular messaging environment each messaging entity has 32 unique first degree contacts, each of the 32 unique first degree contacts also have 32 unique first degree contacts, etc. and that the messaging environment stores trust information for up to four degrees of separation. Accordingly, each messaging entity would have access to trust information for 32⁴, or approximately one-million, other messaging entities.

Clearly, the messaging environment described by Ingerman is pre-configured to limit membership in the community at a certain size. In fact, the Office Action argues that the Ingerman "messaging environment is configured to store trust information up to four degree of separation." Office Action, p. 3-4, para. 4, emphasis added. In contrast, Claim 1's cut-off radius is adaptive and changes over time based in part on a rate of growth of the community. Clearly, Ingerman teaches that the size of membership is constant/fixed. Thus, at least for this reason, Ingerman does not anticipate or make obvious Claim 1.

Additionally, amended independent Claims 16, 17, 18, and 19, are substantially similar to amended independent Claim 1, albeit different in some ways. Consequently, these independent claims are at least unanticipated and non-obvious for at least the same reasons as amended independent Claim 1. Furthermore, dependent Claims 2-15, are also novel and unobvious for at least substantially the same reasons as amended independent Claim 1, upon which they depend.

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In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in

condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted

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